



Toxicological Profiles

WHAT IS THE PUBLIC HEALTH PROBLEM?

- The American Chemistry Council estimates that more than 75,000 chemical substances are used in commerce.
- The Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) has produced about 160 toxicological profiles covering about 800 substances.
- ATSDR focuses on 275 substances that are considered the most hazardous to human health. Thousands of potentially toxic mixtures can be derived from these chemicals.

WHAT HAS CDC ACCOMPLISHED?

ATSDR produces toxicological profiles for hazardous substances found at National Priorities List (NPL) sites. Profiles are developed in collaboration with the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the National Institute for Environmental Health Sciences. Selection of chemicals to profile is based on criteria including the frequency of occurrence at NPL sites or in emergency response situations, toxicity, and likelihood of human exposure to the substance.

Each peer reviewed profile identifies and reviews the key toxicologic and health effect information, and reports how these substances can affect the health of an exposed person. The profiles also identify gaps in knowledge about a specific substance which serves to initiate further research when required.

Toxicological Profiles are detailed documents, but are not exhaustive. They include references to comprehensive and specialized sources of information. ATSDR also produces 2-page fact sheets (ToxFAQs) and Public Health Statements (PHS) to provide easy-to-understand toxicologic information to the public. These are available in English and Spanish language. In 2004, ATSDR released ATSDR Toxicological Profiles 2004 on CD Rom. The compilation includes 162 Toxicological Profiles, 9 Interaction Profiles, and 180 ToxFAQs in English and Spanish. Interaction profiles provide information about chemical mixtures. All of these documents are available on the ATSDR Internet website at www.atsdr.cdc.gov/.

WHAT ARE THE NEXT STEPS?

New research and new interpretations of existing research can prompt an update of a Toxicological Profile. New profiles are also developed, as required. Information about how exposure to toxins affects children is being added to the profiles. Further, the agency will coordinate with the EPA to harmonize risk assessment efforts and conclusions.